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Soviets say 'delirious myths' in reply to U.S. view KGB wrote Klan letters

From Inquirer Wire Services

MOSCOW — The official Soviet news agency Tass yesterday mocked as "delirious myths" U.S. Attorney General William French Smith's contention that Soviet agents wrote letters in the name of the Ku Klux Klan to scare Asian and African nations away from the Summer Olympics.

Meanwhile, the Soviet newspaper Izvestia charged that the Reagan administration had launched a "slandering campaign" by warning Americans not to visit Leningrad because of recent assaults on U.S. citizens.

Smith had told the American Bar Association that letters threatening athletes from 20 Asian and African countries were actually sent by the KGB to discourage participation by those nations.

"We have no idea of Mr. Smith's achievements in legal matters but as far as the concoction of delirious myths goes, he is top-class," Tass said.

The Soviets and 14 of their allies are boycotting the Los Angeles Olympic Games. The Soviets said they could not participate because the

Olympic Organizing Committee had failed to adequately ensure the safety of Soviet athletes.

Tass suggested that Smith's accusation was a response to poor security conditions around Los Angeles.

"There is an epidemic of thefts in Los Angeles, where Olympic ideals have been subordinated to business, where an atmosphere of violence reigns supreme, where bandits shoot at Olympic buses and where one feels as if in prison," said the commentary, written by Tass analyst Yuri Kornilov.

"Is it not high time for the acting attorney general and his advisers from the CIA to announce that in reality every offender at the Games has a miniature radio receiver in his pocket and gets his instructions direct from Moscow?" Tass asked mockingly.

Smith's remarks were made Monday, the same day that the State Department warned Americans to be wary in Leningrad. Three days earlier, an off-duty U.S. Marine in Leningrad was reported beaten up and detained by Soviet police.

The Soviets accused Sgt. Ronald

Campbell, a Marine assigned to the U.S. Consulate in Leningrad, of being drunk and throwing stones at passing cars. U.S. officials said Campbell had been lured from the front of the consulate and beaten up by Soviet police.

"A slanderous campaign has been launched in the United States," Izvestia said. It called the State Department advisory against visiting the historic city absurd.

Washington "used the incident to scare the Americans from traveling to the U.S.S.R.," it said.

Izvestia accused Campbell of interfering with passing cars, throwing stones, shouting abuse and being involved in earlier incidents of drunken driving and fighting in a Leningrad bar. It called him a "rowdy" and a "hooligan."

American tourists in the city, which was the Russian capital until the communist revolution in 1917, have also reported assaults in recent months. There have also been reports of harrasing searches at airports.